

Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee:

I am writing today in support of SB 1503, the Task Force bill on gun violence prevention and firearm suicide prevention.

I am a community member and an older adult who finds it very disturbing to know that so many people are dying or being harmed by guns. We have so much anger around us, people who can't control anger, as well as sadly misguided and mentally challenged people who think guns will solve their problems. We need to keep guns out of the hands of all those people for their own benefit, and certainly to prevent them harming others. Easily obtained guns seem entirely inappropriate in our society.

Every year, we lose close to 600 Oregonians to preventable firearm deaths. Black Oregonians are roughly 10 times more likely than white people to die by firearm homicide. And the firearm suicide rate in rural Oregon is 2.5 times higher than in urban areas and the state's veteran suicide rate is 37% higher than the national average.

I strongly support the SB1503, Task Force bill, and urge the Task Force to prioritize prevention efforts that are centered around those most impacted by gun deaths and shootings, as well as firearm suicides. I urge the Task Force to analyze and prioritize ongoing, sustainable funding for efforts for prevention work that is making the most meaningful, equitable impact, both for homicide and suicide prevention.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony on this issue.

Sincerely, Dorothy Wylie, Bend OR